has recently published an interesting article in the *Siècle*, maintaining that portions of this crypt belong to the church built here by Charlemagne, in 775. M. Lance says that when the Abbé Suger reconstructed the church of St. Denis, in the twelfth century, he preserved as much of the ancient work as possible as a crypt under part of the new building, and that this crypt still remains. The architects of the empire, when Napoleon determined that St. Denis should be the place of sepulture for the princes of his dynasty, disguised and dishonoured it in all ways, and left few portions visible of the old work. M. Viollet Leduc, however, has assiduously devoted himself to removing the disfigurement of the original work, and moreover succeeded in recovering some of the ancient capitals which had been removed.* Without at once assenting to this statement, we may say that the junction of early with late semi-circular work is obvious and interesting.

In addition to its mediæval wonders, St. Denis possesses two monuments of the Renaissance, which are marvellous works,—viz., the Tomb of Francis I. (1547), and that of Henry II. and Catherine de Medicis,—the first by Jean Goujon, the second by G. Pilon. The effigies of Francis and his wife are amongst the most extraordinary works ever produced, and will well repay those who obtain permission to ascend the monument to examine them. There is also the tomb of Louis XII. here, put up in 1515, whereof the architecture is better than the sculpture.

Strange changes in France has St. Denis witnessed, from despotism the most absolute, to licentiousness the least restricted.

And what is now to come there no man living can say.

REMARKS ON THE FORM, TREATMENT, AND APPLICATION OF THE DOME IN MODERN EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE.

To the arch principle we are indebted for many beautiful features, constructive and decorative, in architecture,—as the vault, the groin, and all the charms of the Gothic ceiling: but when the dome was evolved from it its noblest offspring was produced,—it had attained the perfection of its development—its artistic *ultimatum*; for among all the forms of construction or elements of decoration, the noblest—the grandest—is the dome. Add to it but another architectural feature,—let it crown the circular peristyle, and we have before us a type or model of structures that have delighted the world,—the cyclostylar monument of Lysicrates,—the temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli.

The charm of the dome is not in the embodiment of exquisite artistic skill, or profound human intelligence; it is in its simple, inevitable beauty,—its naked natural grandeur, of which it is impossible to judge from those examples, corrupt in form, and false as to treatment and application, which we usually see.

The dome must be considered, and I shall in the following paper consider it, as alike important externally and internally: that truthfulness that should pervade all architecture must characterise the dome, which is false if it have but one side. It is too important a feature for mere exterior decoration, and is only justifiable as the *bonâ fide* roof of an apartment. In fact, it is a more important feature within than without, and is the most natural form, the noblest and the fittest that we could apply to the covering of a great interior. The ceiling that bears the completest analogy to the *form* that raised it and dwells beneath it is the dome: as a late writer observes—"one fancies it supported by the air:" it seems inflated to its form by the atmosphere, and looks infinitely more safe and enduring than the usual flat desert of plaster which, in large interiors, must ever have an insecure and threatening look.

The words "dome" and "cupola" are used indiscriminately, and some confusion arises in consequence: the former properly applies to the covering of circular, square, polygonal, and indeed all forms of bases whose vertical section is circular or curved, whether in one direction, as the round, or in two, as the ogee; while the term cupola is, or should be, restricted to domes of circular bases and of circular vertical section, i.e. to the hemisphere.

There are many forms of domes that may each be advantageously employed according to circumstances, and they will be found to possess various degrees of beauty: the spherical segmental dome, the octagonal dome, the ellipsoidal dome, all have their claims to admiration, though far inferior to the hemisphere. An advantage of the segmental dome is that, being low, it is less liable visually to dwarf the columns of the peristyle, along with which it may be employed. Domes rising from a square, polygonal, or other rectilinear base, are inferior to those from a circular one, as the sides have the demerit of being only of cylindrical curvature. Besides, in such forms the sight splits upon the different angles, and instead of one image, takes in two, three, or more similar ones; whereas in the spherical dome, whether inside or out, the whole idea is embraced by the eye at a glance. The octagonal dome, however, has much majesty on a large scale, and might be employed with much effect over square buildings of great divisions and rectangular composition, as it would produce light and shade in keeping with the contrasted character of that below. The parabolical and the hyperbolical contours are not pleasing in domes. The pointed dome, like that of St. Peter's at Rome, the exterior dome of St. Paul's, and that of the Duomo of Florence, the vertical section of which consists of two arcs of a circle, that if produced would meet in a point, approach too nearly to the Gothic character for employment in classic structures. The pointed ogee dome is not a classic feature, but it has much to recommend it to the Gothic, with the soaring spirit and aspiring expression of which it in a great measure sympathises; and though it does not possess the nobleness and beauty of the hemisphere, yet it looks well on a small scale: rising from square and octagonal bases it has been much used in Elizabethan and Tudor works as a crowning to towers and turrets, and is a good substitute for battlements, as an exterior feature, on buildings having no reference to military defence.

The square dome over a square apartment must yield in point of beauty to the cross vault, which is inferior only to the pendentive dome itself. The square cross vault is a light and elegant roof, and, while we have still in the diagonals of the ceiling or groins the advantage of the domical sweep, it maintains the full height and vertical effect of the walls, and admits of large windows for light and other apertures. It is also a very appropriate ceiling over the intersection of two corridors; but a series of square cross vaults over the corridors themselves, though employed by the Romans and imitated in some of the greatest buildings of modern times, appears improper; as does also the series of pendentive domes much employed in the same situation by the moderns. The simple vault, relieved by decorated belts, from pilaster to pilaster, seems the most proper for such form and proportion of plan, as well as for all oblong apartments and galleries.

The Romans certainly employed the three most beautiful forms of ceiling,—the cylindrical arch, the dome, and the groin. The coved-and-flat ceiling, however, originated by the moderns, is not without its merit: it is more quiet than the groin: it requires less height than the dome and vault; admits of considerable beauty of decoration, and has many advantages over the flat; but of course being mixed, it is inferior in beauty to the vault or dome.

We esteem too lightly the spherical surface, though necessarily limited in its application: we may have the flat and the cylindrical all around us, but the concave spherical surface we can only have above our heads. We underrate the dome as an æsthetic feature, both within and without our edifices: oriental nations have made it the chief feature, in their most ambitious architectural enterprises, but we are cold to its charms. The Persians and Mohammedans in India had so high an appreciation of its æsthetic capabilities and pictorial effect, that they sprang it below the diameter, as if they would have had the whole orb; for the origin of the bulb-shaped dome, though suggested by the horse-shoe arch, is doubtless the desire to have the greatest possible portion of the spherical surface. This, however, was overdoing it: in the eastern lofty and bulb-shaped domes we lose the idea—or rather we never attain to the idea—of their being roofs to some noble apartment. It was a monopoly of thought for exterior effect, in which the moderns of Europe have too much imitated them.

It is to the Romans we are indebted for the dome; and they not only invented it, but made at once the most proper and beautiful application of it. However otherwise corrupt, they exhibited a redeeming taste in this: among them the dome reached its artistic perfection, never since attained; for even the church of St. Sophia at Constantinople is an extravagance—an abuse of the principle—as are, indeed, all the Turkish mosques. The conjunction of the basilica with the rotunda and dome,—the enthronement of the Pantheon on the Temple of Peace by Brunelleschi and Michaelangelo in the composition of St. Maria delle Fiore at Florence, and of St. Peter's Church at Rome, was doubtless a bold engineering enterprise, and evinced great constructive skill; but while science was illustrated, the law of fitness was violated, and the artistic and higher beauties of the former (the Pantheon) were lost in its elevation. So far from this conjunction — this hanging of the Pantheon in the air—being wanting to complete the architectural glory of the ancients, as some have supposed, nothing, as it appears to me, shows the restraining judgment of the Romans more than the fact that they never attempted to perpetrate it; for the Pantheon of Agrippa, in the majestic expanse of its dome, in its natural repose on the ground, in its truer proportions, is infinitely more imposing than any of its elevated modern rivals. Misled by the precedent of the Gothic steeple to which the aspiring principle is natural and proper, they mistook height for greatness; now true greatness exists chiefly in proportion, and the interior use and beauty of a structure is, beyond all comparison, the most important consideration. But here internal proportion and real beauty are overlooked: stand under the dome of St. Peter's at Rome, you are in the centre of a scene of surpassing magnificence: you have dimensions in every direction—height, length, and breadth; but they do not unite in one undisturbed space: it is not one grand expanse, covered as with a firmament of stone, but ramified—divided space: it is Gothic complexity, not Greek or Roman simplicity and sublimity. As to the dome, the noblest and most capable element of the whole scene, the grandeur of its concave expanse is, comparatively speaking, lost by its height from the ground, which has no relation to its diameter. In fact, the architects in these edifices have sacrificed, to a supposed exterior beauty, not only internal propriety and symmetry, but the magnitude, and, proportionately, the grandeur of the dome itself; and while they supposed that by dint of their constructive skill they were rivalling the ancients, bringing out the latent power of architecture, and carrying it to its perfection, they were violating the eternal law of fitness, which never justified their enterprise: no conceivable purpose of a church calls for it: imposing structure upon structure for mere exterior effect is against common sense, the laws of art, and all analogy of nature. I know that the imagination delights in all that evinces greatness of achievement in mechanical science and daringness of constructive enterprise;

* Amongst the subjects represented on these capitals in a rude manner are,—the Temptation of Eve, the Expulsion from Paradise, the Adoration of the Magi, the Resurrection of Lazarus, &c.

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